

CREDENDA / AGENDA

Volume 1

What must Christians believe? How must Christians live?

Number 1

The Scripture is the library of the Holy Ghost; it is a pandect of divine knowledge, and exact model and platform of religion. The Scripture contains in it the *credenda*, "things which we are to believe," and the *agenda*, "the things which we are to practice."
Thomas Watson

Welcome to our first issue of *Credenda/Agenda*. As the title indicates, we are interested in holding to the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints, as well as living the faith that was so delivered.

Unfortunately, Christians tend to divide into groups in their understanding of the Scriptures. There are some Christians who are into "doctrine," and who go ballistic if you fail to dot the *i* properly in supralapsarian. There are also many Christians who think we all need to get in touch with our emotions, and whose religion is nothing more than a vague, fuzzy benevolence.

It is crucial for Christians to come to an understanding of the biblical balance. We must teach and believe what God has revealed about Himself and salvation. We must *understand* what He has given us.

At the same time, it is not enough to rest in an analytic understanding. Faith without works is *dead*.

An example of this biblical balance can be seen in the book of Ephesians. The first three chapters are full of high doctrinal teaching concerning our position in Christ, and His eternal purpose for the church. The last three chapters are a practical application of those doctrines.

There is no biblical reason why Christians should have to choose between doctrine and life. We are required to have both. As Paul instructed Timothy, "Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers" (1 Tim. 4:16).

Timothy is not instructed to choose between the two. He is required to study and understand, and he is required to put what he studies into practice. What is life but applied doctrine?

In future issues, we want to emphasize both. What doctrine? We will discuss the attributes of God, the triune nature of the one God, the Deity of the man, Christ Jesus, the biblical teaching of salvation, the relationship of law to grace, and much more.

What issues of lifestyle will we address? We will discuss marriage, child-rearing, education, evangelism, missions, and much more. - DW

Hence that dread and amazement with which, as Scripture uniformly relates, holy men were struck and overwhelmed whenever they beheld the presence of God. When we see those who previously stood firm and secure so quaking with terror, that the fear of death takes hold of them, nay, they are, in a manner, swallowed up and annihilated, the inference to be drawn is, that men are never duly touched and impressed with a conviction of their insignificance, until they have contrasted themselves with the majesty of God.

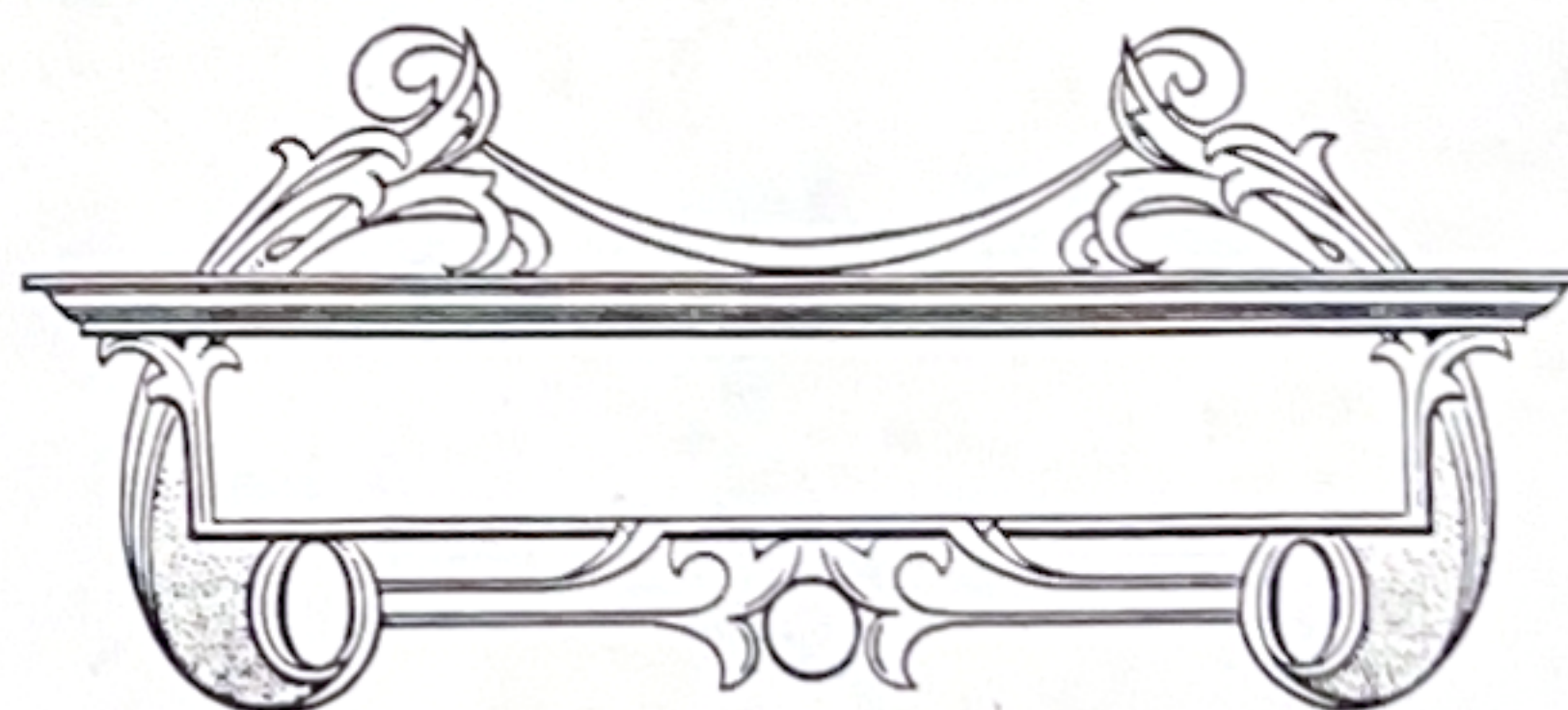
John Calvin

Not everyone agrees that a strict doctrinal emphasis is important. There are some, in the name of ecumenicism, who want anyone who bears the name of "Christian" to come together with some display of unity. But true unity is in truth, not in institutional posturing. And besides, as Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones put it, "Putting all the ecclesiastical corpses into one graveyard will not bring about a resurrection."

But doctrinal error is not the only danger. Some Christians fall into the opposite ditch, and reject those whom God has accepted through Christ. As Ezekiel Hopkins said, "And what is all this contention and separation for? Oh, they will tell you it is for the true and sincere worship of God; that they may serve Him purely without human additions or inventions...Alas, my brethren, was there ever any schism in the world that did not plead the same?"

It is our duty to keep the peace, as well as to keep the faith. - DW

As we seek to put our Christianity into practice, a good spur to the endeavor is this definition of a Christian given to us by a bitter and cynical unbeliever, Ambrose Bierce. "Christian, *n.* One who believes that the New Testament is a divinely inspired book admirably suited to the spiritual needs of his neighbor. One who follows the teachings of Christ in so far as they are not inconsistent with a life of sin."



PARENTS NOTE:

As for those parents who will not use the rod upon their children, I pray God He useth not their children as a rod for them.

Thomas Fuller

Some parents, like Eli, bring up their children to bring down their house.

George Swinnock

Now every mother has power to obtain prompt obedience, if she commences with her children when they are young. They are then entirely in her hands. All their enjoyments are at her disposal. God has thus given her all the power she needs to govern and guide them as she pleases. We have endeavored to show, by the preceding illustrations, that the fundamental principle of government is, *when you do give a command, invariably enforce its obedience*. And God has given every mother the power. He has placed in your hands a helpless babe, entirely dependent on you; so that if it disobeys you, all you have to do is cut off its sources of enjoyment, or inflict bodily pain, so steadily and so invariably that disobedience and suffering shall be indissolubly connected in the mind of the child. *What more power can a parent ask for than God has already given?* And if we fail to use this power for the

purposes for which it was bestowed, the sin is ours, and upon us and upon our children must rest the consequences. The exercise of discipline must often be painful, but if you shrink from your duty here, you expose yourself to all that sad train of woes which disobedient children leave behind them.

John Abbott

Copies of *The Mother At Home*, of which this is an excerpt, may be obtained from Crossroads Bookstore in Moscow (208-882-1140).

Go down into your hearts and take the keys of them and ransack your private cupboards, and narrowly observe what junkets your souls have hitherto lived upon, and gone behind the door and there secretly and stoutly made a meal of them. As dogs have bones they hide and secretly steal forth to gnaw upon, *so men have sins they hide under their tongues as sweet bits*.

Thomas Goodwin

You can do more than pray, after you have prayed, but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed.

John Bunyan

God had but one Son without corruption, but He had none without temptation.

Thomas Brooks

